

Thomas Jefferson to John Page, July 17, 1807, The Works of Thomas Jefferson in Twelve Volumes. Federal Edition. Collected and Edited by Paul Leicester Ford.

TO JOHN PAGE J. MSS.

Washington, July, 17, 07.

My Dear Friend, —Yours of the 11th is received. In appointments to public offices of mere profit, I have ever considered faithful service in either our first or second revolution as giving preference of claim, and that appointments on that principle would gratify the public, and strengthen that confidence so necessary to enable the executive to direct the whole public force to the best advantage of the nation. Of Mr. Bolling Robenson's talents & integrity I have long been apprized, and would gladly use them where talents & integrity are wanting. I had thought of him for the vacant place of secretary of the Orleans territory, but supposing the salary of 2000 D not more than he makes by his profession, & while remaining with his friends, I have, in despair, not proposed it to him. If he would accept it, I should name him instantly with the greatest satisfaction. Perhaps you could inform me on this point.

With respect to Majr Gibbons, I do indeed recollect, that in some casual conversation, it was said, that the most conspicuous accomplices of Burr were at home at his house; but it made so little impression on me, that neither the occasion nor the person is now recollected. On this subject, I have often expressed the principles on which I act, with a wish they might be understood by the federalists in office. I have never removed a man merely because he was a federalist: I have never wished them to give a vote at an election, but according to their own wishes. But as no government could discharge it's duties to the best advantage of it's citizens, if it's agents were in a regular course of

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thwarting instead of executing all it's measures, and were employing the patronage & influence of their offices against the government & it's measures, I have only requested they would be quiet, & they should be safe; that if their conscience urges them to take

an active & zealous part in opposition, it ought also to urge them to retire from a post which they could not conscientiously conduct with fidelity to the trust reposed in them; & on failure to retire, I have removed them; that is to say, those who maintained an active & zealous opposition to the government. Nothing which I have yet heard of Major Gibbons places him in danger from these principles.

I am much pleased with the ardor displayed by our countrymen on the late British outrage. It gives us the more confidence of support in the demand of *reparation* for the past, & *security* for the future, that is to say, an end of impressments. If motives of either justice or interest should produce this from Great Britain, it will save a war; but if they are refused, we shall have gained time for getting in our ships & property, & at least 20,000 seamen now afloat on the ocean, and who may man 250 privateers. The loss of these to us would be worth to Great Britain many victories of the Nile & Trafalgar. The meantime may also be importantly employed in preparations to enable us to give quick and deep blows.

Present to Mrs. Page, & receive yourself my affectionate & respectful salutations.